

Smart verdict

For murder victim's dad, paperclip was a talisman

By Kathie Neff
Eagle-Tribune Writer

As reporters swarmed a jubilant William Smart yesterday, the father of murder victim Gregory Smart brandished a peculiar memento of his son: a paperclip.

Mr. Smart said he had carried it throughout the trial because it had been Gregory's and it reminded him of how he had instructed his son in selling insurance. Both men worked for Metropolitan Life Insurance Co.

Mr. Smart said he once told his son always to carry a paper clip in one pocket so he could use it to attach the check to insurance forms at the end of a sale.

The paperclip had been in the pocket of one of the suits his daughter-in-law dropped off — "in plastic garbage bags" — at the senior Smarts' home after the murder, he added. She was convicted yesterday of conspiracy to murder, accomplice to murder and witness tampering in connection with the death.

Judith Smart, the murder victim's mother, wore her own amulet during the two-week trial: a locket with her son's boyhood picture and a lock of his hair.



Eagle-Tribune photo by Marc McGeehan

Paperclip: William Smart holds up a paperclip that belonged to his son Greg as Judith Smart looks on.



Locket: Judith Smart and locket with Greg's picture, hair.

Pamela Smart verdict dominated everyone's conversations

By Gregory Lang
Eagle-Tribune Writer

ANDOVER — The familiar greetings — "Good afternoon" and "How are you doing?" — were replaced yesterday at several stores and coffee shops.

Instead, five simple words reflected what appeared to dominate all conversations.

"Did you hear the verdict?"

By mid-afternoon at places like Barron's Country Store on Haggitts Pond Road, most had: Pamela Smart, 23, had been sentenced to

life in prison for helping plot the brutal slaying of her husband.

"She got what she deserved," said John Cyr, a 24-year-old truck driver. "From what I saw, I don't see a 15-year-old going out and killing someone for the thrill of it."

Mr. Cyr first heard news of the verdict on the radio. Elsewhere, office workers and bank tellers stole away to watch television.

Not everyone questioned thought Mrs. Smart was guilty. Ralph Rossetti, 45, of Brown Street, said he was surprised by the verdict and questioned the fairness of the trial.

"They should have sequestered the jury... and held the trial outside Rockingham County," Mr. Rossetti said.

Brenda Barron, a manager at the country store, agreed. "I think that showed the judge's bias" against Mrs. Smart, she said.

For some, the trial's end came as a welcome relief.

"I was so tired of hearing about Pamela Smart and the trial," said Mabel Freeman, 79, who heard the news at Holy Family Hospital where she is a volunteer. "In fact, I was disgusted at people — that was the only thing they were inter-

ested in."

Julie Rutkowski, 19, of Ellsworth Street, said she knew all along Mrs. Smart was guilty, but had growing doubts about whether she would be convicted.

"I was sure she was guilty... but thought there was a possibility she would walk," Miss Rutkowski said.

"I expected that they would say she'd be guilty all the way," said Beatrice Burley, 60, of Gould Road. "She looked like a machine."

"I think it was a foregone conclusion from the moment she got

on the stand," said town Health Director Everett Penney, referring to the guilty verdict. "I don't think she got a fair trial. The jury should have been sequestered."

He also questioned the treatment of "the three little runts" who bargained for reduced prison sentences in return for their testimony against Mrs. Smart.

"I don't think justice is served by holding those who committed the crime with less of a penalty" than Mrs. Smart, who did not pull the trigger, he said.